

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 IO-13 /081 W

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R 091430Z DEC 76

FM AMEMBASSY ANKARA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5733

INFO AMEMBASSY ATHENS

AMEMBASSY NICOSIA

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMCONSUL ADANA

AMCONSUL ISTANBUL

AMCONSUL IZMIR

C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 9331

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, TU, IZ, EG, LY, PLO, SA

SUBJECT: TURKISH-ARAB RELATIONS

1. DECEMBER 9, IN THE COURSE OF A DISCUSSION OF TURKISH
RELATIONS WITH THE ARAB COUNTRIES, DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF MFA
MID-EASTERN AND AFRICAN OFFICE, SUAT CAKIR, MADE THE FOLLOWING
OBSERVATIONS:

A. IT IS VIRTUALLY IMPOSSIBLE FOR THE MINISTRY OF
FOREIGN AFFAIRS (MFA) TO CONDUCT A COHERENT POLICY WITH RESPECT
TO THE ARAB COUNTRIES BECAUSE OF CHRONIC INTERFERENCE BY THE
SECOND LARGEST PARTY OF THE FOUR-PARTY COALITION GOVERNMENT, THE
ISLAMIC FUNDAMENTALIST NATIONAL SALVATION PARTY (NSP). THE MOST
OBVIOUS MANIFESTATION OF THIS PROBLEM IS THE FACT THAT TURKEY NOW
IS WITHOUT AMBASSADORS IN JIDDA, BAGHDAD AND CAIRO AND HAS BEEN
UNABLE TO REPLACE THEM BECAUSE OF REFUSAL BY THE NSP TO APPROVE
THE CANDIDATES PROPOSED BY THE MFA.

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B. FONMIN CAGLAYANGIL IS TENTATIVELY SCHEDULED TO VISIT

TWO ARAB COUNTRIES WITHIN THE NEXT SIX WEEKS. THE FIRST VISIT WILL BE TO SAUDI ARABIA AND WILL TAKE PLACE EITHER DECEMBER 23 OR DECEMBER 30. THE MFA IS SKEPTICAL ABOUT THE VALUE OF A VISIT BY CAGLAYANGIL AT THIS TIME SINCE JIDDA HAS BEEN SATURATED BY THE VISIT OF NINE OTHER MINISTERS DURING THE LAST YEAR. CAGLAYANGIL'S INVITATION, HOWEVER, IS A LONG-STANDING ONE AND HE FEELS HE MUST HONOR IT. (THE MOST RECENT HIGH LEVEL VISITORS HAVE BEEN DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER TURKES AND THREE OTHER MINISTERS WHO PARTICIPATED IN THE ANNUAL PILGRIMAGE TO MECCA. TURKES, WHO IS CHAIRMAN OF THE SMALLEST PARTY IN THE COALITION, THE EXTREME RIGHT-WING NATIONALIST ACTION PARTY (NAP), MET WITH SENIOR SAUDI OFFICIALS WHILE IN JIDDA AND EXTENDED AN INVITATION FROM PRESIDENT KORUTURK TO KING KHALID TO VISIT TURKEY. ACCORDING TO CAKIR, TURKES HAD HOPED THAT HIS VISIT WOULD HAVE MORE OFFICIAL CONTENT THAN THIS, BUT BOTH THE PRESIDENT AND THE GOVERNMENT REFUSED TO GIVE HIM ANY SUBSTANTIVE RESPONSIBILITY.) THE SECOND VISIT THAT CAGLAYANGIL TENTATIVELY HAS SCHEDULED IS TO CAIRO IN MID-JANUARY. COMPLETION OF THIS VISIT, HOWEVER, IS DEPENDENT ON THE APPOINTMENT OF A NEW TURKISH AMBASSADOR SINCE CAGLAYANGIL WILL REFUSE TO GO IF THERE IS NO AMBASSADOR IN CAIRO. (WHILE THERE IS NO TURKISH AMBASSADOR IN JIDDA, A FORMER AMBASSADOR TO JIDDA IS PRESENTLY THERE TO ASSIST DURING THE PILGRIMAGE SEASON AND HE WILL STAY UNTIL CAGLAYANGIL COMPLETES HIS VISIT.)

C. IRAQI-TURKISH RELATIONS CONTINUE TO BE QUITE GOOD. THEY ARE TROUBLED ONLY BY THE IRAQI TREATMENT OF THE TURKOMAN MINORITY IN KIRKUK. WHILE THE TURKS ARE UPSET BY WHAT THEY CONSIDER IRAQI ATTEMPTS AT "ARABIZATION" AND ITS POSSIBLE DOMESTIC POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS, THE GOVERNMENT IS NOT INCLINED TO PRESS THE IRAQIS ON THIS ISSUE IN VIEW OF THE GENERALLY GOOD STATE OF THEIR RELATIONS.

D. THE IRAQI-TURKISH PIPELINE WILL BE COMPLETED ON SCHEDULE IN JANUARY AND AN IRAQI MINISTER WILL ATTEND THE OPENING CEREMONY.

E. THE WEEK OF "SOLIDARITY WITH THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE" WHICH IS CURRENTLY BEING OBSERVED IN ISTANBUL WAS ORIGINALLY ORGANIZED BY LEFTIST STUDENT GROUPS. PARTICIPANTS NOW INCLUDE MOST LEFTIST ORGANIZATIONS AND REPRESENTATIVES OF ALL POLITICAL

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PARTIES. VARIOUS ARAB COUNTRIES ARE ALSO PARTICIPATING IN THE SOLIDARITY WEEK. CAKIR SAID AS OF THIS MOMENT, THE MFA WAS NOT PARTICIPATING IN THE MEETINGS AND HOPED TO BE ABLE TO STAY OUT OF THEM. (AT THIS POINT IN THE CONVERSATION, CAKIR RECEIVED A TELEPHONE CALL FROM THE COUNSELOR OF THE LIBYAN EMBASSY REQUESTING ASSISTANCE IN GETTING VISAS FOR LIBYAN PARTICIPANTS. WHEN CAKIR HUNG UP THE PHONE, EMBOFF EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT TURKS WOULD BE PARTICULARLY MINDFUL OF THE POTENTIAL SECURITY PROBLEMS

SUCH VISITORS CREATED, NOTING THAT THE TERRORISTS WHO HAD CARRIED OUT THE ATTACK AT IUZANBUL AIRPORT EARLIER THIS YEAR HAD BEEN PALESTINIANS WHO HAD COME FROM LIBYA. CAKIR SAID GOT WAS ALERT TO THE PROBLEM. HE ALSO SAID PALESTINIANS HAD "MADE A LOT OF PROMISES" AFTER THE ISTANBUL INCIDENT, BUT PALESTINIAN MOVEMENT SO FRAGMENTED HE WAS NOT SURE SUCH ASSURANCES WERE OF ANY VALUE.) RUK THE ARREST LAST WEEK OF NEARLY 200 TURKISH AND SYRIAN CITIZENS ON THE SYRIAN-TURKISH BORDER WAS "NOTHING UNUSUAL". CAKIR SAID THE BORDER AREA IN QUESTION IS MAJOR TRANSIT POINT FOR SMUGGLERS. HE SAID THE PROBLEMS BETWEEN THE BORDER PATROL AND EXTENDED FAMILIES, PARTS OF WHICH LIVE ON BOTH SIDES OF THE BORDER (AND FOR WHOM SMUGGLING IS A WAY OF LIFE) IS A CONTINUOUS ONE. THE ARRESTS LAST WEEK WERE REPORTED IN THE NEWSPAPERS BECAUSE A SHOVING MATCH OCCURRED BETWEEN POLICE AND THE PERSONS WHO INSISTED ON CROSSING THE BORDER WITHOUT DOCUMENTATION AND BECAUSE MANY OUTSIDERS ARE IN THE AREA BECAUSE OF THE HOLY SEASON. OTHERWISE, CAKIR SAID, THE EVENT WOULD HAVE GONE UNNOTICED.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: FOREIGN RELATIONS, REPORTS, FOREIGN POLICY POSITION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 09 DEC 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: BoyleJA
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976ANKARA09331
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760455-1115
From: ANKARA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19761256/aaaabwgcg.tel
Line Count: 134
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: BoyleJA
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 22 APR 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <22 APR 2004 by ShawDG>; APPROVED <05 AUG 2004 by BoyleJA>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: TURKISH-ARAB RELATIONS
TAGS: PFOR, TU, IZ, EG, LY, SA, PLO, (CUKIR, SUAT)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006